

Real Property Law Section Donates More Than \$10,000 To Housing California At Its Silver Anniversary Retreat

At its recent 25th anniversary retreat in Huntington Beach, the Real Property Law Section of the California State Bar donated more than \$10,000 to Housing California, a nonprofit housing advocacy group. The section raised money during the retreat by holding a raffle, silent auction, and fun run along the beach.

“The Real Property Law Section wanted to make a real contribution toward a charitable group that is related to the practice of its members,” said Anthony Arostegui, a member of the real property law section’s executive committee and organizer of the fundraising efforts. “We chose Housing California because they work legislatively and locally to help make housing more affordable to low-income Californians.”

Sacramento-based Housing California lobbies in the capitol for housing and budget policy changes to assist homeless and very low-income Californians. The organization also works with local governments on land use reforms to allow for more low-income housing. According to Julie Spezia, executive director of Housing California, the organization aims to increase funding for affordable homes, decrease homelessness, and enact land use reforms.

“The marketplace is broken because it is not providing homes for families on minimum wage,” Spezia said, “It takes 131 hours of work at minimum wage just to afford an average two-bedroom apartment in California. You cannot get on the road to home ownership unless you can pay rent and still have money to save.”

Housing California is working to increase the supply of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing through lobbying and by partnering private developers with state and local governments. “We have to bring the price of homes down, and that will require an investment from state and local governments,” Spezia said. “We bring private and public capital together to build great-looking, high quality homes for people with low incomes.” Housing California is funded by private donors, foundations and through its sponsorship of the nation’s largest low-income housing conference each spring. The real property law section’s contribution will help employ advocates to pursue Housing California’s objectives.

Nargis Choudhry, chair of the real property law section, said the contribution to Housing California is in step with the section’s purpose. “Pro bono has been something that has always been part of our mission as a section, and it’s part of the mission of all attorneys when they join the bar,” Choudhry said, “In the past, we have done Habitat for Humanity days where we go out and swing hammers. This year, we wanted to go further.”

Among the raffle and silent auction prizes offered were fine wine, sports tickets and week’s stay at an apartment in Paris, all donated by companies, firms and individuals. The weekend’s biggest prize, the Paris apartment stay, went for \$2,000 in the silent auction.